

USAID's Environmental Program in Nicaragua

PIONEER CO-MANAGEMENT MODEL ON PROTECTED AREAS IN NICARAGUA



Legal and conceptual base of the Co-management Model of Protected Areas:

- **The Nicaraguan government is promoting separation and decentralization (Law N° 290).**
- **Environmental and Natural Resources General Law (Law N° 217) establishes the transfer of the administration of protected areas from the government to others (Article 22).**
- **The “co-management” concept has been added recently (March/99) to Nicaraguan legislation through the Protected Area No. 14-99**
- **Co-management agreements are signed between NGOs and the government (for 10 years). The Mayor’s offices, the communities and owners must also authorize the agreement.**

The objective of the Mission's Natural Resource Management Program (NRM) is to improve the management of renewable natural resources and protect biological diversity in eight selected protected areas (PAs). USAID partners to meet these objectives include The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Associates in Rural Development (ARD, Inc.) and the Cocibolca Foundation.

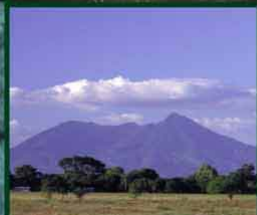


Nicaragua *naturalmente*

Reserva Natural **VOLCÁN MOMBACHO**
Belleza entre las nubes



Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas

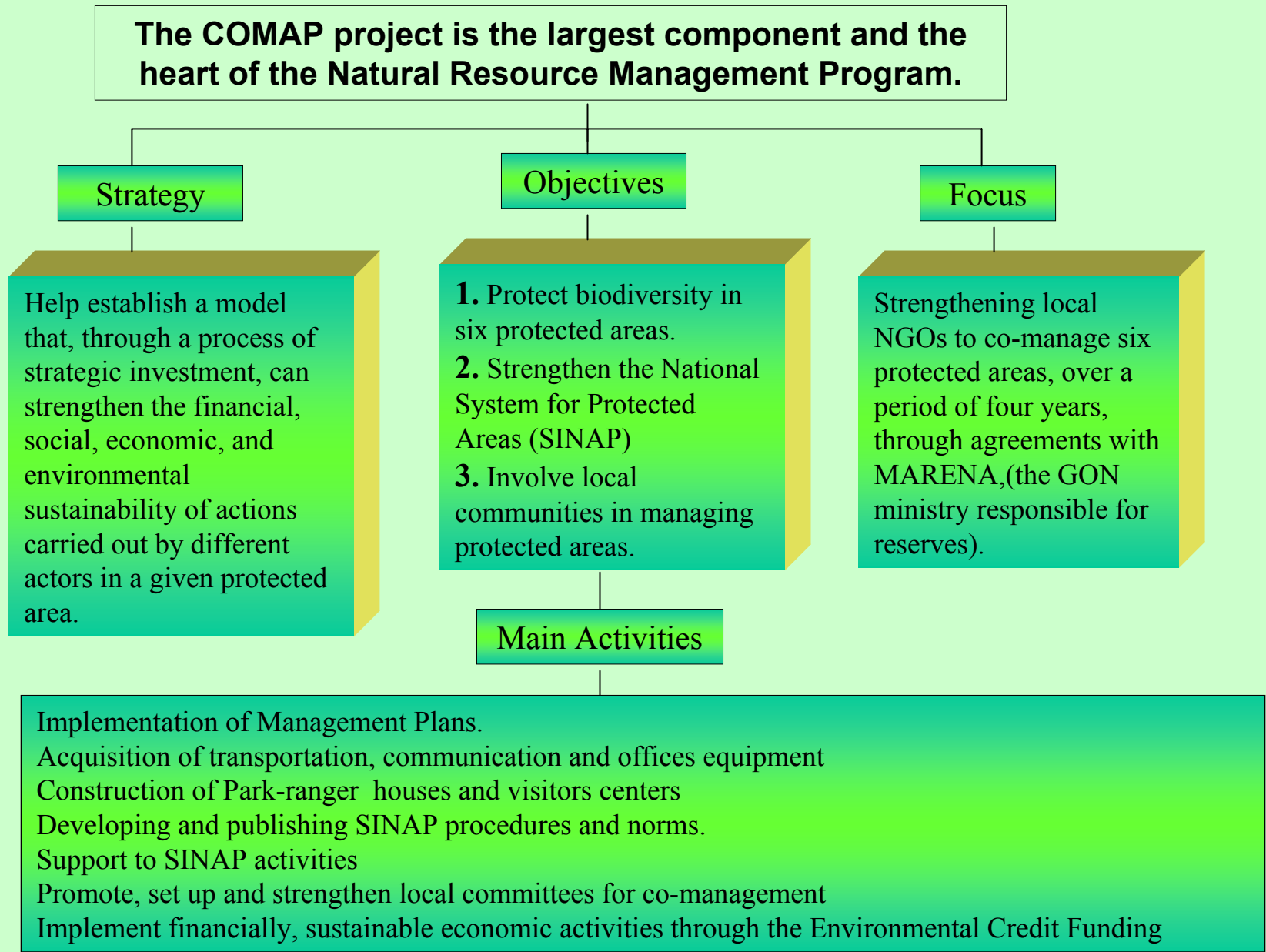





The Biological Province of Central America is classified worldwide as a region of Megadiversity. Nicaragua is located in the center of a megabiological strip, where the flora and fauna of North and South America converge and is known as the Nicaraguan and Honduran Mosquitia.

The factors that benefit Nicaraguan biodiversity are topography, climate and a complex geomorphological, biological and cultural history. All of these resources are incorporated into 76 protected areas that make up the National System for Protected Areas (SINAP).

Co-management of Protected Areas Project (COMAP)



The background of the slide is a photograph of a natural landscape. In the foreground, there is a calm, greenish lake. Behind the lake, there are rolling hills covered in dense, green forest. The sky is a pale, hazy blue. The text is overlaid on the middle part of the image, enclosed in a thin orange rectangular border.

**Co-management is
achieved by establishing
responsibilities and good
relationships between
actors.**

Community Participation and Benefits

Sharing
Experiences



Beneficiaries of the
Environmental Credit
Funding



Recognition for Community Contribution. A
landowner donated a piece of land where the
Park-ranger house is being built.



Main Challenges of the Process of Co-management

- Establish and implement co-management agreements between the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, NGO's, communities and local authorities involved.

- Establish Local Co-management Committees, as the local authorities to set policies for the protected areas.

- Create sustainable ecological revolving funds to finance productive alternatives in the communities.

- Locate markets for forest products harvested in a sustainable manner.

- Financial sustainability



Main Lessons Learned

- **Co-management agreements need legal and clear authority for each actor.**
- **The co-management concept must be discussed and internalized for all the different actors, before assuming commitments for its implementation.**
- **The communities broadly participate in co-management if there is no harm to their survival right, and if their roles and responsibilities for planning, decisions taken and activities developed for the management plans are made collectively.**
- **Co-management sustainability requires the different actors to take responsibility for their different roles, and requires the NGOs to strengthen their organizational, technical and financial capacity.**
- **Gender equality is crucial for the acceptance and adoption of the concept, to induce changes in behavior, and in management practices in the protected areas.**